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Implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Statistical Programme 2017

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

Report of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Business Registers

Summary

The document presents the key outcomes of the meeting of the Group of Experts on Business Registers, which was held on 27-29 September 2017. The meeting was organized following a decision of the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2017 and the recommendation of the previous meeting of the Group of Experts on Business Registers in September 2015.

This report is provided to the Conference of European Statisticians for information.

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I. Attendance

1. The fourteenth meeting of the Group of Experts on Business Registers was held in Paris, France from 27 to 29 September 2017. It was organized in cooperation with the Statistical Office of the European Union (Eurostat) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and with the support of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

2. The meeting was attended by representatives from Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, State of Palestine, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam. The meeting was attended by representatives of Eurostat, OECD, the European Central Bank (ECB), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and Norbert Rainer (independent expert).

3. Luisa Ryan (Australia) chaired the meeting. Jamie Brunet (Canada), August Götzfriend (Eurostat), Hugo Hernandez (Mexico), Pierrette Schuhl (France), Nadim Ahmad (OECD) and Fabio Tomasini (Switzerland) acted as session chairs.

II. Organization of the meeting

4. The meeting was divided into the following sessions:

(a) Session I: Production of business demography statistics and other statistics by linking the SBR with other data sources;

(b) Special Session on the Task Force on Entrepreneurship Statistics;

(c) Session II: The role of the Statistical Business Registers (SBR) in the modernisation of the statistical production process;

(d) Special Session on Country Progress Reports;

(e) Session III: Work on linking SBR to geo-spatial information;

(f) Session IV: Making Better Use of Administrative Data Sources;

(g) Special Session on developing global guidelines on SBRs;

(h) Session V: Registers and globalisation;

(i) Session VI: Quality Measurement and Quality Management Frameworks;

(j) Special Session for countries of East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE).

III. Summary of discussions and the main conclusions reached at the meeting

5. Recommendations for future work are given below. The main outcome and summary of the discussions are presented in the annex. The proceedings of the meeting are available on the UNECE website https://www.unece.org/index.php?id=44252.

IV. Recommended future work

6. The following topics were proposed for discussion at the joint meeting of the Group of Experts on Business Registers in 2019, subject to the decision of the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians:

(a) The role of SBR in the modernisation and integration of statistical production, including data sharing within and between statistical offices;

(b) The use of administrative data sources, including big data and web-scraping;

(c) Web portals for respondents;

(d) User's perspective on SBR;

(e) Statistical units in SBR;

(f) Globalisation;

(g) Business demography.

7. The results of the 2016 Country Progress Reports that were presented during the meeting should be taken into account when organisation the 2019 Expert Group meeting.

8. In the special session for EECCA and SEE countries participants supported the organisation of a regional workshop to discuss issues of particular importance to the countries of the region. The following topics were suggested: Use of administrative data sources, including cooperation with the register owners; methods to measure and improve the quality of SBR; strategies and practices for maintaining SBR; production of statistics based on SBR; and profiling. The workshop should facilitate exchange of experiences and focus on providing good practices that can be implemented in statistical offices of the region. UNECE should initiate the preparation of the workshop in cooperation with international and regional organisations and countries.

Annex

Summary of the discussion

A. Session 1: Production of business demography statistics and other statistics by linking Statistical Business Registers with other data sources

1. The session was chaired by Jamie Brunet from Statistics Canada and included presentations by Netherlands, Spain, OECD and Mexico.

2. The first two presentations focused on measurement and trends in family businesses, with presentations from the Netherlands and Spain. Both touched on the challenges of defining and obtaining data on the subject, which is of increasing interest and importance as there is a growing recognition that family business behave differently, with potential policy implications. There were slightly different definitions of family business in the two studies, with Spain including a broader set of businesses than the Netherlands. Both presentations showed an impressive integration of multiple administrative data sources (from multiple providers) to produce meaningful data.

3. The presentation from Mexico demonstrated a very effective usage of business dynamics data to accurately predict the number of surviving firms in future years. The level of accuracy attests to the reliability of the data and robustness of the models used.

4. OECD's presentation on motivating business demography indicators highlighted – and gave the group the chance to appreciate – the very significant progress SBRs have made in supporting analysis on trends in business dynamics and the business characteristics and behaviours that can help drive productivity and economic trends. The presentation underscored key policy questions for which SBRs should continue to strive to acquire and maintain frame variables, in particular related to the role firms play in globalisation and trade.

5. The subsequent presentation from the OECD on guidelines being produced for linkage of trade and business statistics invited conference attendees to provide feedback on the proposed outline.

6. In summary, the session topics provided relevant information and stimulated useful discussions on the importance of continuing to improve SBRs as central hubs for analysis of business demography and entrepreneurship statistics.

B. Special Session on the Task Force on Entrepreneurship Statistics

7. Norbert Rainer informed the meeting about the work of the Task Force on Entrepreneurship Statistics that was established by the Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians in June 2016. The Task Force consists of experts from Canada (Co-chair), Finland, Mexico, the Netherlands, United States, Norbert Rainer (Co-chair), Eurostat, OECD and UNECE.

8. The objective of the Task Force is to develop guidelines on the statistical infrastructure required for the production of business demography and entrepreneurship statistics. The guidelines will provide guidance on how to develop SBRs to support the production of business demography and entrepreneurship statistics and on linking SBRs

with information from other data sources for improving the production of business demography statistics with a view to be used as entrepreneurship indicators.

9. The guidelines will be consistent with and supplement relevant existing materials, in particular the *Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers* (UNECE, 2015), the *Eurostat-OECD Manual on Business Demography Statistics* (Eurostat and OECD, 2007) and the *Business registers – Recommendations manual* (Eurostat, 2010). The target groups of the guidelines are SBR statisticians as well as experts and producers of business demography and entrepreneurship statistics.

10. Participants were encouraged to submit comments and proposals to the draft guidelines presented during the Session, as well as examples of good practices for possible inclusion.

C. Session II: The role of SBR in the modernisation of the statistical production process

11. The session was chaired by August Götzfried from Eurostat and included presentations by Australia, United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Denmark and Slovenia.

12. The Australian presentation gave an overview of the re-engineering of the business register of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), which is part of a broader transformation program of the ABS. The key feature of the redeveloped business register will be (1) a narrower spine comprised of legal entity identifiers that will be used to produce frames, and link and integrate other datasets, and (2) the use of broader corporate infrastructure, including an enterprise data management warehouse and metadata registry and repository, that will underpin the SBR and all other ABS infrastructure. The new SBR is planned to be used in production at the end of 2018.

13. The Office for National Statistics of the United Kingdom presented their programme to update and transform data collection and production processes. As part of the programme a new SBR is being developed as well as a new legal unit based list of the business population, named the Business Index, which will provide a complete list of legal business entities in the UK. The new SBR will be based on cloud technology and include a data management platform, services for processing data and a new user interface. The new SBR will also provide a spine function enabling linking of business datasets and facilitating the use of administrative and survey data to create statistical outputs.

14. France presented the work on automatic profiling of enterprises for the SBR, which was implemented in 2016. Through the system of automatic profiling some 70,000 enterprises have been created in the SBR encompassing 230,000 legal units. In addition to creating these new enterprises in the SBR, the identification and calculation of key characteristics of the business register (main activity, workforce and turnover) is automatized. From 2017, the continuity of these units will also be derived automatically and used for the identification of enterprises. The presentation explained in detail the algorithms used to derive the characteristics of the enterprises in the SBR based and the algorithms for deciding on their continuity.

15. The presentation by Sweden gave an overview of possible ways for improving the data collection for the Swedish SBR by using a common infrastructure for data provision developed by a group of government agencies. Government agencies and municipalities can use the infrastructure to share information and e-services. The infrastructure includes information about legal and local units that can be shared and updated. A solution for e-ID (login and password) is ready, which will allow direct reporting via the web for all legal and local units. Updates, e.g. on variables of legal and local units can be made continuously

by respondents. Electronic self-reporting is expected to improve quality and timeliness and facilitate increased automatic verification of information.

16. Denmark provided an overview of the electronic online reporting system used for the SBR and other statistics. All Danish businesses are registered in the Danish Central Business Register with a unique identifier. The data collection for all business statistics is managed by a central reporting unit, which maintain a list of business respondents. The list is integrated with the SBR which provides information about name and addresses of respondents. The reporting has been digitalized, so that by today 96 per cent of all survey questionnaires, 450.000 per year, are received digitally. The high degree of digitization is due to the fact that digital reporting is compulsory. Under certain conditions respondents can be exempted from online digital reporting, in which case they will be contacted by regular posted mail.

17. Slovenia presented their work to improve the quality and coverage of the SBR. The statistical office has established central management of local kind of activity units missing from the SBR; activity coding for large units; and treatment of demographic and insolvency events. The new SBR functionalities have been developed in cooperation with survey statistics that uses information from the SBR. The important lesson learned was that close cooperation with surveys statistics is necessary to ensure a successful outcome; close cooperation with users is also required in order to develop the role of the SBR as a backbone for statistical production. With restricted resources it was noted that further developments may have to be undertaken gradually in a stepwise approach.

18. In summary, the session addressed the modernization and reengineering work which is ongoing in many statistical organizations for improving the statistical production processes and the basic statistical infrastructure, i.e. the statistical business registers. The main aims of this reengineering work are to efficiently serve the SBR users with higher quality information, to better use administrative and new/innovative data sources and to upgrade the technical and IT infrastructure. Overall these reengineering efforts should also lead to resource savings in the organizations, to better frames, to better business demography, business and macroeconomic statistics.

D. Special session on country progress reports

19. Masao Takahashi, Statistics Bureau of Japan, presented a summary of the outcome of the 2016 country progress reports. 49 countries/organisations submitted a progress report, of which 4 from Africa, 3 from the Americas, 12 from Asia and the Pacific, and 27 from Europe.

1. Current situation of SBRs in countries

20. The presentation of the current situation of SBRs in countries highlighted the coverage of the SBRs in terms of the number of employees in the units of the SBR, the number of units (enterprises or legal units) in the SBR and the use of geographical coordinates; 52% of the replies indicated that the SBR includes geocoding.

2. Progress and developments in 2016

21. Concerning progress and developments in 2016 the three areas where most work was reported included statistical units, maintenance and quality:

- Statistical units: introducing enterprise groups, handling of big and complex enterprises /enterprise groups by profiling, implementation of automatic profiling

and automatic delineation of enterprises, geo-coding and identification of foreign legal units;

- Maintenance: Redesign of automatic maintenance procedures (addition of new units, reactivating units, assigning inactive status to units), updating of rules for creating group structure, collection of unique identification of foreign units of enterprise groups;
- Quality: development of quality indicators, analysis of non-response; improving timeliness, coherence between the SBR, structural business statistics and national accounts, modernization of data collection methods.

3. Future plans

22. For future plans work on the following issues was the most frequently reported:

- Statistical units: introducing enterprise groups, profiling and delineation of enterprises, developing of e-form for profiling;
- Roles of the SBR: development of business demography statistics, creation of longitudinal version of the SBR, unique identification numbers, applying GSBPM, linking the SBR with trade data;
- Data sources: introducing new variables on globalization (e.g. the nationality of the enterprise/enterprise group, the legal entity identifier (LEI)), validating data from administrative sources, profiling of enterprises, exchange of micro data with other organisations for statistical purposes;
- Maintenance: Reengineering of SBR, changing to platform that supports exchange of data with administrative registers, geo-coding.

4. Main challenges

23. The three main challenges reported were roles of the SBR, statistical units and data sources:

- Roles of SBR: Introduction of geo-coding, meeting the demand for more timely and more detailed data; making better use of administrative data sources and survey data in SBR; production of statistics based directly on SBR; revision of continuity rules of enterprises, scarce resources to develop/improve SBR;
- Statistical units: introduction of enterprise groups, profiling of enterprise groups, delineation of complex enterprises, ensuring coherence between profiling results and SBR units, ensuring a consistent definition of employment, big data;
- Data sources: Administrative data sources apply different requirements for their units, too little information about changes in data sources, access to tax data, exploring new data sources for the SBR, e.g. big data, web-scraping.

24. The summary of the country progress reports was found very useful in terms of providing an overview of current developments, plans and challenges. The summary also gave directions for future work and priorities in the area of SBR. Attempts should be made to further increase country coverage of the progress reports.

E. Session III: Work on linking the SBR to geo-spatial information

25. The session was chaired by Hugo Hernandez from National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Informatics of Mexico and included presentations by China and Switzerland.

26. Switzerland presented their work on improving the management of addresses of the Swiss SBR. To this end the statistical offices plans to re-engineer the processes with the objectives to standardise reporting interfaces, improve and rationalise address management and encourage the automation of repetitive processes. The presentation provided more details on the new model that will be implemented, including on the relations between different units of the SBR and address variables. The objectives include also better cost-efficiency, improved quality of addresses as well as streamlining maintenance activities. It was noted that a strong model helps to support automated processes and that the system should be flexible enough to allow stepwise modifications.

27. China presented the challenges of capturing statistical and geographical information of a very large number of units located in a large territorial area. Each unit in SBR carries information about its address and a code of the smallest statistical area used in the census. As part of the 2013 Economic Census the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) was able to collect the geographic (GPS, 12-bit) location coordinates of the units included in the census through the use of PDAs. This information was used for updating SBR, so that a geocode is assigned to each unit of the SBR. The NBS has analysed and visualized geospatially enabled information, for example using employees' density map by Census area for studying urban planning. The cooperation with an external company to develop the mapping of geographical location was highlighted as essential for the successful outcome.

28. In summary, linking information of SBR with geographical location is an opportunity to increase the quality of existing outputs of SBR and to develop new outputs and services to meet user needs. The development of information and communication technology facilitates the production of geospatial business information. In developing geospatial business statistics NSOs should consult and cooperate with organisations with specialised knowledge and key stakeholders and user groups.

F. Session IV: Making better use of administrative data sources

29. The session was chaired by Pierrette Schuhl from France and included presentations by Switzerland, Georgia and Egypt.

30. The Swiss presentation explained the use of administrative data for SBR maintained by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO). Only after 2011, as the national regulation on the unique business identifier came into force, the FSO could go ahead with a wider use of administrative data for the production of business statistics, adding first VAT data and since 2015 customs data. When using customs data the FSO matches the information of the import and export declarations to the enterprises in SBR by using the unique enterprise identifier. The SFO also has access to the monthly snaps shots of the customs database, containing information on all imported and exported goods, their origin, destination, value, weight, means of transport etc. These data are used to complete and improve variables of SBR as well as to specify and correct the perimeter of national and international enterprises.

31. The importance of using administrative data and their quality was illustrated in the presentation by Georgia. The Georgian SBR includes some 25 variables, of which 80% are sourced from administrative registers. The access to data from administrative sources for statistical purposes is granted by the national law on official statistics and by government decrees which oblige other public institutions to cooperate with Geostat. Information

collected from administrative registers includes information about newly registered and liquidated companies, revenues and taxes. The updating procedures are automated to some degree. Information about e.g. address and kind of economic activities is sometimes missing or incorrect, which give problems for updating SBR.

32. The presentation by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) of Egypt provided an overview of the production of SBR in Egypt. The main use of SBR has been to provide a population of statistical units from which frames and samples for economic surveys can be drawn. The SBR draws mainly on administrative data sources. Egypt is currently conducting the establishment census, which will provide an update of establishments for SBR. Also, the next economic census is being prepared, which will include additional information about the establishments that will be integrated in SBR.

G. Special session on developing global guidelines on SBRs

33. Ronald Jansen (UNSD) informed the meeting participants about the establishment of a UN expert group on business statistics. The objectives of the group would be to 1) prepare global guidelines on SBR based on existing guidelines, notably the UNECE guidelines, and 2) give guidance on issues related to business and economic statistics, taking into account the use of administrative data, the choice of statistical units in the context of globalization and issues related to a large informal sector. The Group will be chaired by Italy. It will commence work in 2017 and is scheduled to have its first meeting in May 2018.

H. Session V: Registers and globalisation

Session Chair: Nadim Ahmad, OECD

34. The session included presentations by France, Eurostat, Tunisia and the European Central Bank (ECB).

35. France presented recent developments of the enterprise group register (Lifi) developed and maintained by INSEE. Information from Lifi on enterprise groups (perimeter and basic business register characteristics) is used as input for the French SBR (Sirus). For the enterprise group register a new application was introduced in 2015. The application includes automatized treatment of input data and running an algorithm that delineates the global group head (GGH) and the group perimeters, based on information about legal units and their financial relationships. For a given enterprise group two perimeters are available in Lifi, depending on the percentage of control. Because of the improvements in the enterprise group register, the statistical system is now better equipped for measuring the globalisation of the French economy.

36. Eurostat provided an overview of the work on the European System of Business Registers (ESBRs), with a focus on the key challenges of globalisation for business registers and business statistics more generally. In this context, the ESBRs aims to address shortcomings in the ESS, e.g. inconsistencies in business statistics due to different roles of national SBRs, lack of harmonised approach in describing cross-border phenomena and data exchanges. Eurostat stressed that the unit enterprise is far more relevant that the legal unit for business statistics: using enterprise as a unit leads has several advantages, namely it facilitates measuring the concentration of the business economic structure and the breakdown by industry, it allows the consolidation of non-additive variables (turnover, sales, purchases), and it simplifies the representation of enterprises' performance.

37. Tunisia presented a very interesting analysis of the performance of the offshore sector using the Tunisian SBR. . The study found that, during the observation period, offshore exporting and importing firms performed worse than their onshore counterparts in terms of level of wages, job creation and productivity: these results represent a useful contribution to the debate on benefits and limits of offshore incentive regimes.

38. ECB provided an overview of the Register of Institutions and Affiliates Database (RIAD) - a business register that collects information from individual members of the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) and national banking supervisors - and introduced plans to allow the incorporation of supranational sources into the database. The register currently includes variables for the identification and stratification of the units, and for demographic developments and relations between the units. An upcoming version will rely on a broader use of non-resident information while future plans include incorporating data from four supranational datasets, i.e. the EuroGroup Register (EGR), the Global Legal Identifier Foundation (GLEIF) data, EU's Transparency Directive (ESMA), and FINREP/COREP dataset.

I. Session VI: Quality measurement and quality management frameworks

39. The session was chaired by Fabio Tomasinia, Switzerland, and included presentations by Australia, Finland, Eurostat, Germany and Canada. The session was dedicated to present examples of quality measurement and quality management. The five presentations could be seen as a follow up work of the chapter 10 of the Guideline on Statistical Business Registers (UNECE 2015) and seen as new examples to add as annexes to this documentation.

40. The presentation of Australia highlighted the need to improve the profiling work but at the same time to have some direct reduction of the operational costs. The aim is to reduce statistical risk through improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the production processes and supporting systems in the profiling program. The profiling program includes three steps: 1) reduction of the initial profiling selections and increasing the use of triggers based profiling; 2) movement of less complex profiling to the ABS Data Acquisition and Provider Team Management; 3) Establishing a team to undertake more complex profiling and editing of annual and quarterly surveys for selected industries.

41. The presentation by Finland provided an example of implementation of a quality assurance framework for data collection. The data collection should be routinely monitored and revised as required. The Data Collection Department at Statistics Finland annually prepares a report on response rate trends and the quality management of direct data collection. These initiatives can help in improving the response rate and the quality of the collected data. The production of reliable statistics requires a wide array of data collection efforts and management. The quality of statistical data collection is a combination of the above-mentioned efforts to monitor and improve the data collection process and tools.

42. Eurostat presented the data quality program for SBRs in the European Statistical System, based on the EU regulation on business registers. Quality assessment of SBR is necessary to insure definitions, data, references described in the methodological manual. The aim is to assess the quality level by setting and monitoring quality standards. The goal of this activity is to increase the quality of EGR data used for the coordination and the standardization of all cross border statistics.

43. Germany provided a presentation of the strategy for implement quality management for profiling enterprise groups. A clear strategy is needed in order to ensure an efficient organization of work and for monitoring the results of the profiling. The profiling is divided in two main groups: 1) Automatic (bottom-up) profiling, and 2) manual profiling, which

again is divided in two groups: light profiling and intensive profiling, both applying a top-down approach. A program is developed in order to support and coordinate the work of profilers based in the regions (Lander) of Germany. The program includes provision of methodological guidance and tools, support of communication and data access, and possibilities for evaluation and improvements.

44. The Canadian presentation provided an overview of statistical quality in the context of SBRs and gave an example of how to measure and mitigate frame errors. The quality management of the SBR should take as starting point the dimensions of quality of official statistics. A two-pronged strategy has been implemented to measure quality and maintain/approve accordingly. The training of the profilers was seen as a critical component in order to improve quality of profiling activity. An interesting proposal is the compilation of a composite indicator for each profiled group that summarises a number of variables in one measure.

45. In summary, work on quality management is still at an early stage in many organisations. Further cooperation and exchanges of good practices in quality management will be useful for countries. Particular challenges will include a strategy for quality management of profiling. Profiling is resource demanding and the resources allocated need to be justified.

J. Special session for EECCA and SEE countries

46. The special session for countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia and South East Europe was organised as part of the Programme to Support Statistical Capacity Building in Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States Countries (the ECASTAT programme) and with the support of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS-STAT).

1. Quality issues in SBR

47. Norbert Rainer presented the main quality issues related to SBRs, covering a framework of data quality, the quality dimensions of the SBR and critical areas for the quality of SBR.

48. The quality of SBR should take into account the quality dimensions of official statistics (relevance, accuracy, timeliness, punctuality, accessibility, clarity, comparability and coherence). It was advised to include four steps when implementing a quality assurance framework: selection of quality indicators, quality reporting, quality assessment and quality improvement.

49. Five areas were identified as critical for the quality of SBR:

- Transformation of administrative units into statistical units;
- Delineation of large and complex enterprise groups;
- Lack of full coverage in market activities (for instance small and micro units);
- Significant errors in the stratification variables (for instance economic activity, size classes);
- Insufficient consideration of the demographic events in the maintenance of SBR.

2. Use of administrative data in SBR

50. Norbert Rainer presented the main issues involved in the use of administrative data sources for SBR. The use of administrative data sources is essential to ensure the coverage of the SBR and to attribute characteristics (e.g. kind of economic activity, turnover, employment/employees) to the statistical units of SBR.

51. With a reference to the UN Fundamental principles of Official Statistics and the European Statistics Code of Practice is was argued that NSOs should choose the data sources with regard to quality, timeliness, costs and burden on respondents.

52. Appropriate statistical procedures would include that NSOs be involved in the design of administrative data to make these more suitable for statistical purposes. NSO should reach out to owners of administrative data source and engage in establishing cooperation with the owners and agree on access to the data. This would also, eventually, include that NSOs would be responsible to engage in work to ensure the quality and suitability of the administrative data for statistical purposes.

53. The Generic Statistical Law on Official Statistics also stipulates that providers of administrative data are obliged to provide NSOs with available data for statistical purposes. Further, the providers of administrative data should consult with the NSO (and other producers of official statistics) before implementing changes that might have effect for the statistical production.

54. In summary, in addition to a comprehensive legal basis, good relations and co-operations with the owners of administrative data sources are important. The use of administrative data also involves getting dependent on the data sources and related risks. Furthermore, relations with government and legislation authorities are needed to ensure that the use of administrative data for statistical purposes is recognised and supported at the political level.

3. Country reports

55. CIS-STAT provided an overview of work on SBRs in CIS countries. The presentation covered the Russian version of the Guidelines on Statistical Business Registers (UNECE 2015) that was translated into Russian with the assistance of CIS-STAT, the role of SBR in producing economic statistics, relationships with the international classifications, monitoring the status of SBRs in CIS countries. Issues for further improvements of SBRs in countries included improving of the coverage of SBRs, identification of statistical units, identification of international enterprise groups and their foreign branches, recording of demographic changes, improving the quality of the SBRs, IT and software improvements and using the SBR for producing of more integrated economic statistics.

56. Azerbaijan presented SBR that have been produced and maintained by the *State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan* Since 1992. The SBR is updated based on information from a number of different administrative data sources (e.g. the ministry of taxation and the ministry of justice) as well as from statistical surveys. The State Statistical Committee has identified the following steps to further improve the SBR: updating of software used to maintain the register, implementation of a system that allows regional statistical offices to enter data in SBR, increased use of administrative data, and integration of data from different sources.

57. Montenegro gave a presentation about the role of SBR in the modernisation of the statistical production process in the Statistical Office of Montenegro. The SBR is updated based on different administrative data sources including the administrative business register and the tax register and by use of surveys. A unique identification number used by all administrative bodies facilitates linking data from different sources. The Statistical office

plan to modernize SBR to strengthen the role of the register as the backbone in the statistical production by coordinating populations of statistical and administrative units, increase integration and statistical coherence, providing better access to users and reduction of response burden. It is also the objective to improve timeliness of SBR through quicker updates.

58. Armenia presented the SBR maintained by the National Statistical Service, including an overview of the legal framework for the SBR, applied classifications, data sources and the main content of the register. Data sources include both administrative sources and surveys. The SBR is used for conducting surveys as well as for compiling business demography indicators and other summary measures to users. For future improvements the National Statistical Service will work to improve the quality of the indicators of the SBR and providing methodological assistance to relevant state bodies when creating administrative registers.

59. The Russian Federation provided an overview of the ongoing activities to modernize SBR of ROSSTAT based on a development strategy for 2016-2020. The objectives of the modernisation include both methodological issues, e.g. development of profiling methods and business demography statistics, as well as improvements of working processes, including increased use of administrative data, automation of processes, and better user access to the SBR. Through the establishment of a centralized database duplication of information should be reduced and better control of coherence and quality of data can be ensured and it facilitates automation and validation of data. It also implies that e.g. more coherent sampling frames can be produced for survey statistics.